

An important focus in Phase II of this research is to determine public attitudes toward alternative strategies for managing the natural and human resources in the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine system. During the second phase of this project, we will develop three to five realistic and specific scenarios that cover the range of management actions that could be taken. We will ask respondents to evaluate each scenario (i.e., management strategy) in terms of its acceptability, equity, and effectiveness. We also will determine attitudes about possible impacts of each scenario on various interest groups. Along with evaluation of these specific management alternatives, we also will determine individual's own willingness to pay for increased water quality, either directly through taxes or indirectly through higher cost products. We will analyze what types of behavioral changes individuals would be willing to make. We will also determine what other types of information people need and want, along with the best way to provide them with such information. Finally, we will determine attitudes about what public policy changes should be made to manage the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine system.

A basic premise of our theoretical model is that people's attitudes about the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine system will differ, based on a set of individual background characteristics. In this section we briefly describe the main background characteristics that we hypothesize influence attitudes about the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine system. As was mentioned above, we will not, at this point, fully specify all the hypothesized relationships between these background characteristics and the various attitudes just described. Selected background characteristics will, themselves, be inter-related. In fact, some may be intervening between other background characteristics and attitudes. This discussion and Figure 2 indicate some of the general relationships we predict.

Certain demographic variables have been shown to have an important influence on environmental attitudes (Van Liere and Dunlap 1980; Buttel 1987). Level of formal education is directly related to positive environmental attitudes and concern over pollution. Age is also related, with younger people tending to be more concerned about environmental issues. Sex differences in environmental attitudes have also been found, but the results are not conclusive. Likewise income has been found to have an important, but inconsistent, relationship to environmental concern. Race may also be a factor, but this has not been adequately investigated.

Where an individual lives can also have an important influence on environmental attitudes. The most important residence factor for this study may be proximity to the coastal area. Coastal residents will likely have different attitudes than those who live inland. One particular mediating factor, however, will be whether inland residents use the coastal region for recreation or own property on the coast. Past research has not examined the issue of proximity to the environment of interest. Residence related research has mainly focused on rural and urban differences in environmental attitudes (Buttel 1987; Murch 1974). Although debate remains, most